



March 13, 2009

The Honorable David T. Dreier  
United States House of Representatives  
Cannon House Office Building, 233  
Washington, DC 20515-0526

Dear Mr. Dreier:

I am writing to request 2010 Department of Defense funding to develop the small unmanned aircraft system (SUAS) called Switchblade. Switchblade is a game-changing innovation that first demonstrated its effectiveness in December 2008. As such, DOD did not anticipate this new unique capability in its procurement planning but represents a constructive opportunity for Congress to bridge the funding to accelerate this force protection capability into current engagements.

Switchblade is a man-packed, expendable, lethal SUAS developed to engage a target quickly with minimal collateral damage through detonation of an on-board explosive. Soldier-launched from a lightweight canister it is flown using a standard SUAS ground control unit. Switchblade permits the operator to identify and track a threat using the ground control unit and engages the target with autonomous terminal guidance. Using quiet, electric propulsion it will provide real-time video for information gathering, targeting, and feature or object recognition. Switchblade comes as a self-contained item, packaged inside a robust container, ready to withstand battlefield conditions.

Funding in 2010 will support developing the operational performance parameters necessary to complete design of the system. The design will define system and system-of-systems functionality and interfaces, complete hardware and software design, and reduce system-level risk. It will establish the product baseline for all configuration items and identify key system characteristics; the maturity of critical manufacturing processes; and an estimate of reliability based on demonstrated reliability rates.

Accelerating the development of Switchblade will support our warriors with a powerful battlefield enabler providing unprecedented situational awareness and combat power, especially in urban and mountainous environments. With full motion video and last minute call-off capability, it will dramatically minimize collateral damage.

I respectfully request your support in 2010 to increase by \$8,000,000, RDT&E, Defense-Wide, PE 1160428BB, Line #235, Unmanned Vehicles, only for the Switchblade Lethal Unmanned Aircraft System.

Thank you very much for your unwavering support of AeroVironment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy E. Conver".

Timothy E. Conver  
Chairman and CEO